

there should be tolerance; the interests of the minority or minorities should not be disregarded. The minority should not be at loggerheads with the majority; there should prevail a sense of give and take.

In a democracy there should be opportunities for the development of individual personality. Everyone should have access to knowledge, education, etc. Participation in democracy involves the sharing of responsibilities. Active, intelligent and effective participation is possible only if the citizens are adequately educated.

Indirect Democracy - An Appraisal

Man has lived for about a quarter-million years on this planet, yet he has had some knowledge of democratic ideas and practice for only about twenty five hundred years. Even today, democracy as a way of life exists only in a small number of countries. Only about one in four practises its basic procedures. Of the many democracies which have been born in the past, only a handful have survived. In the past years the casualties have been peculiarly heavy among the former dependencies of the West for the simple reason that these were countries which were currently embarking on democratic experiments. The fragile mechanism of representative democracy which almost all of them adopted proved shortly to be unfitted to the needs and capabilities of most of them.

As a concept, democracy can best be understood as having not just one but three interrelated meanings. First, and most important, it is a way of making decisions. Second, it is a set of principles by which those decisions are made. Third, it offers a set of normative values. A Greek text summarises the basis on which democracy makes its decisions. The Greek term *demos kratos* means simply people power. Probably not very long after this term was in common use, Pericles, leader of Athens, when it was the model democracy among the Greek cities, could say, "We are calling a democracy because the government is in the hands of

many, not the few." This definition of democracy has remained remarkably consistent throughout history. Over two thousand years later, the great French political theorist, de Montesquieu, who so strongly influenced the thinking of the American founding fathers, echoed the ideas of Pericles, "When the body of the people is possessed of the supreme power, it is called a democracy." And, of course, best known to Americans, is Abraham Lincoln's famous description of democracy as government of the people, by the people, and for the people." But in spite of the seeming consistency of the words which have been used throughout history to describe democracy, the term has had a very different meaning at various times and places. Nothing would seem to be simpler, for example, than to say that democracy means 'people power'. But immediately two vital questions demand two answers. The first of these is; What does **people** mean? The other is: How is this power to be organised and exercised? The history of democracy for more than two thousand years has been little more than the story of the various efforts to give satisfactory answers to these two questions. There is thus much confusion and misunderstanding about the meaning of democracy. George Bernard Shaw once proposed that, in order to eradicate the confusion about the meaning of democracy, the leading scholars and thinkers of the world be convened and the issue settled once and for all.

If democracy is a regime in which those who govern are selected by the governed, the situation is altered by the development of parties, and these parties often hinder the democratic process and the system becomes far removed from the spirit of indirect democracy. People vote for a party, and a representative elected by virtue of his party membership assumes responsibility to the party. Representation becomes party democracy. Democracy is also criticised on the ground that it hampers the growth of classes. When men of fame and fortune are elected, they may be inclined to favour their class rather than the community as a whole.